



AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

HIRAM LODGE N^o 40,

IN THE

MASONIC HALL, RALEIGH,

ON THE

TWENTY-FOURTH JUNE, 1846.

BY

THOMAS J. LEMAY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF SAID LODGE.

RALEIGH, N. C.

Printed at the Office of the Raleigh Star,

1847.

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THE ALBANY

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ADDRESS.

MY BELOVED FRIENDS AND BRETHREN :

The day which calls us together—the anniversary of St. John the Baptist—should ever be regarded by the Christian world as next in interest to that which marks the nativity of the blessed Redeemer himself, which is every where hailed with anthems of praise, and observed as a time of grateful and joyous festivities ; because it was the day which gave to our distracted and babbling earth, the Prince of Peace, when was first proclaimed “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The day of St. John should be regarded because he was the divinely commissioned messenger to “prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight.” “His father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied, saying, ‘And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways ; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God : whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’” It is celebrated by Masons because he is claimed by them as the first patron of their order after the introduction of the Christian dispensation—he himself being the honored instrument of ushering in that glorious epoch—and furnishing in his own character an example of piety, benevolence, self-denial and integrity, worthy of universal imitation. These were the prominent traits of his character. They are too plainly

written in the Gospel, and too well known to this assembly, to require a delineation of them on the present occasion. We may, with greater profit to ourselves, and with equal honor to him, spend the day in scrutinizing our own motives and conduct—in enquiring if we are moved by the elevated principles which governed his conduct, and are squaring our lives by the wholesome precepts which he both preached and practiced—and whether we have satisfactory evidence of the conformity of our venerable institution therewith, in the effects which it produces—the fruit which it bears. By the fruit, the tree is known. Can we bear this test, severe as it is, before the tribunal of our own minds? Can we bear it so far as our fruit is known, before that of the world? These questions may be easily solved, we think, if you will follow us attentively, in a brief examination of the origin and objects of Free-Masonry—the advantage which the cause it undertakes to advance, derives from *its* mode of promoting it—the evils, (if any) to which it is liable, and how these evils may be best remedied.

I. Whilst our limited researches do not authorise us to affirm, as do some, that Masonry, in its organized forms and ceremonies, is of divine origin, we venture to claim that honor for the great principles upon which it is established, and regard the proof of its having received the approbation of the Deity as demonstrative—in the remarkable providence by which it has been preserved for so many ages, despite of all the rage and persecutions of ignorance, bigotry and superstition, and amidst the corruption and destruction of all other human institutions. To promote the best interests of mankind, has ever been the leading object of Free-masonry. Its broad foundations were laid in universal charity. It has ever sought to gain its ends, by enlightening the under-

standings, subduing the passions, and refining the affections of its members, and enlarging the circle, and strengthening the cords of brotherhood among mankind. It is true, that, originally, the craft consisted chiefly, if not altogether, of operative Masons; and that the presumption is, no regular Lodges were organized until the period when the Temple of Solomon was erected, which was completed A. L. 3028. That great and wise king then constituted at Jerusalem a number of Lodges, and employed 113,600 of the fraternity, besides 70,000 laborers in the erection of that magnificent edifice; previous to which an intimate connexion was formed between himself and Hiram, king Tyre; and their friendship, by the mystic tie, was permanently cemented. Under their direction as Grand-Masters, with the assistance of Hiram Abiff, as Deputy Grand Master, Masonry flourished in an eminent degree; and from them spread with great rapidity.

Ninus, who had assisted in building the Temple introduced the Masonic art in France and Germany in the year of the world 3030; and from that time to its introduction in England it was introduced and took deep hold in many other parts of the world.—The precise period at which it was introduced into Great Britain, is uncertain; but after the Roman invasion it was patronized there by Julius Cæsar and his Generals. The Emperor Caraunus became a zealous patron of the order. From him a charter was secured, and the appointment of a Grand Master in the person of the martyr St. Alban. But after the Romans evacuated the country, Masonry fell into neglect, and continued in a very feeble condition, until it was revived by Alfred the Great, A. D., 872, from whom it continued to flourish until the reign of King Athelstane, in A. D. 962, when the Grand Lodge at York was established, of which the king's brother, prince Edwin, was appointed the first

Grand Master. A Grand Communication of all the masons in the kingdom was called to assemble at York, where they formed a book of Constitutions, from ancient Documents, from which all the Lodges in England and America have derived their authority ; and this has given to them the appellation of *Ancient York Masons*. After this, Masonry, not only in England, but in other kingdoms of Europe, received the countenance and support of kings and princes, as well as the most exalted statesmen and men of learning and exemplary piety. It also extended to Turkey, Russia, Africa, and, finally, soon after the settlement of this country, to America, and now it throws its far reaching arms of benevolence around the entire globe, strengthened by the approbation and patronage of the wise and good of every name, and of every clime.

One of the primary designs of operative masonry was to improve in architectural science, by the mutual communication of geometrical knowledge connected therewith, which was first revealed from heaven in the patterns which were handed down for the construction of the ark, the tabernacle and the Temple. But with them, also, the advancement of civilization, the practice of charity, the inculcation of the worship of God, and the cultivation of virtue among men, were cardinal principles.

These principles, since its transit from its *operative* to its *speculative* character, so far from having been lost, have been strengthened and established. Freemasonry is still the patron of science, the protector of morality, and the hand-maid of religion. It teaches to all nations the great truths which lie at the foundation of all true religion—the existence, the nature and attributes of God—it acknowledges him as the moral governor of the universe, and paves the way for the introduction of Christianity among heathen

and pagan nations; and in Christian countries it adopts the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as taught in the Bible, without embarrassing its operations with any of the peculiarities of the different sects and denominations: its leading objects being to inculcate universal benevolence and good will among the brethren, and to support an extended system of holy and healthy charity; not claiming to be a strictly *religious*, but a *social* and *moral* institution, operating for the good of mankind under the sanctions of religion, as a secondary means of promoting the happiness of the race.

II. In the examination of the advantages the cause of humanity derives from its mode of promoting it, (to which we now invite your attention,) it will be clearly seen that it is a legitimate, efficient and laudable means.

But before we proceed farther, there is one preliminary question which should be settled, and that is, can voluntary associations, with such objects as ours, be tolerated without disparaging Christianity, encroaching upon its rights, and assuming its prerogatives? We say they can, and so have taught many of the most illustrious fathers of the church, by their precept and their still more forcible example. It is the glory of Christianity, we know, that she only has the means of changing and purifying the heart—renovating and perfecting the whole moral nature of man—and of restoring perfect peace, order and harmony to our fallen and degenerate race; and when this great work shall have been accomplished among all nations, and kindred and people and tongues under heaven; when “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;” “when righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea,” and “all shall know the Lord from the least unto the great-

est;" then, and not till then, all other instrumentalities will be totally obscured and laid aside. "A light will then beam upon the world, which will as far transcend the light of Masonry as the blaze of the sun, shining in his strength, exceeds the feeble twinkling of the most distant star. The glorious Gospel of the blessed God will then fill the world, and the sun of righteousness will dart his life-giving beams to the remotest and darkest corners of the earth." But until the Church shall do her duty, she cannot complain, if others, seeing the necessity, shall attempt portions of it at least for her; and until she shall, in the exercise of all her energies and authority, fully accomplish her purposes, she should not despise nor reject any means, however humble, which may operate as auxiliaries to her cause. Something can be done by a *single* well wisher of any cause, and much more by the united energies of *many*. The irreligious world, though under the government of Satan, are not all pleased with "the yoke of bondage." The "spirit of God enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world;" and "the gospel that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we must live righteously, soberly and Godly in this present world." Therefore, a degree of grace, producing good desires, and a sense of moral obligation is imparted, in the enlightening influence of the Spirit, to every human being, which is increased according to the amount of light received into their understandings from the Gospel. Under these influences, there are various degrees of faith, and religious feeling and sentiment found in different individuals, who are struggling to throw off the yoke of sin, and are ready to aid in repairing the evils it has entailed upon us—some who are "almost persuaded to be," and others almost in practice, Christians. Shall the cup of cold water from one of these be rejected, because he does not come under the *class* of Christians? Surely not. Neither can there be any valid objection to the uni-

ted offerings of charity which any associated number of them may be disposed to throw into the lap of suffering humanity. Whenever there is a great emergency, men naturally, without respect to distinctions of rank, sect or party, voluntarily and immediately rush to the rescue, shewing that reason and common sense dictate to all the importance of associated effort. The single child that wanders in the woods alone, and becomes bewildered and lost, excites the sympathy not only of the parents and family to which it belongs, but of the whole neighborhood; and a company is instantly formed for rescuing the wanderer from the dangers to which it is exposed, and of restoring it to its agonized friends. When a man's house is on fire, companies rush to the rescue, and by united efforts extinguish the raging flames. How absurd would it be, in either of these cases, to object to this mode of assistance, either because it was the duty of the families to have taken care of their own children and to have protected their own houses, or on account of their scruples as to the propriety of encouraging voluntary associations!! Nor would the absurdity be less glaring, if these companies had been previously well organized and kept in readiness for all such useful purposes. It would be equally preposterous to reject aid in reclaiming the wanderer from the wilderness of sin—in extinguishing the malignant passions which consume the moral temples of the Deity—and in alleviating human misery—because it might happen to come from the Masonic Society.

Has masonry contributed to these ends? Yes—liberally, and efficiently. As the patron and preserver of the arts, in the barbarous ages of superstition and ignorance, it has contributed in no small degree to refine, enlighten and civilize the world. “During that dark period, poverty (except among the masons) was without a friend, and the humble supplications of distress were lost

amidst the proud pursuits of ambition, the wild and terrible clangor of arms, and the sweeping desolations and cruelties of persecution, anarchy and despotism." Are examples of their charity demanded? We point to the widow, bereft by the king of terrors of her only earthly prop, whose afflictions are soothed, and whose hopes are revived; to the helpless orphans, whose wants are supplied, and who are snatched from the vortex of destruction; to the comfort and support extended to the outcasts in the East; to the light which breaks in upon the cheerless gloom of the loathsome prison; and to the mercy, even in the hour and heat of battle, which is shown to the vanquished foe. To use the language of an eloquent writer, "I have wondered that Christians, who are commanded to judge the tree by its fruits, have often been found among the enemies and persecutors of Masonry. Does not this tree yield good fruit? It disarms the bitterest personal animosities, teaches forgiveness and forbids revenge. Is not this good fruit? Actuated by its pervading principles, at some mysterious sign or sound, arms have dropped from the hands of the most deadly enemies on the field of mortal combat; and those who were ready to pierce each others bosoms have embraced like brothers. Is not this good fruit? It fills the heart of the penniless stranger with gladness, wipes the widow's tear, and relieves the needy orphan. Is not this good fruit?" And does not this satisfactorily shew the advantage which the cause of humanity, virtue, and even religion, in the partial extension and influence of the church, derives from the Masonic mode of advancing it? Shall a tree so fruitful of good as this be cut down, or left neglected and forsaken, to wither and perish? No! the response of every philanthropic bosom is no!—and even the hollow heart of the parched and shrivelled misanthropist, echoes *no!*

III. But we must acknowledge there are evils to which it is lia-

ble, and should anxiously inquire how they may be best remedied. The evils are not, 1st, as is suspected by some, that masonry tends to disparage and is inimical to christianity; for we "place on the altar of our consecrated temple, the holy Bible, as its most precious oblation, and its richest ornament. We press the hand of the initiate, when he first kneels there, upon its folded pages, as the guarantee of his fidelity and truth; and we open his before darkened eyes upon its heaven inspiring pages, that there he may ever look for light and instruction". None of these evils; secondly, are to be found in the symbolical language which we have adopted. With us symbols have no tendency to superstition or idolatry. They are used to convey ideas of other things, and are more impressive than mere words and letters, as "they bear in nature a resemblance to the objects which they are employed to represent—forming a medium of communication by which a christian brother—no matter what his vernacular tongue—gains at once an access to the bosom of the Turk, the Arab, or the Chinese, and reposes there in safety—and conveying lessons of virtue and morality, which tend almost irresistably to restrain the constant and well informed brother from vice and immorality". Neither, thirdly, is there any evil in excluding from our chart all peculiar religious creeds and tests, since we are united upon the great feature of true religion which embraces the substance of the whole, as respects the duty of man to man—which distinguishes no other society on earth—the broad and philanthropic shield which it throws over the whole human family—forming a golden chain of connection between all nations and tongues. Nor, 4thly, does our obligation tend in the least to render the institution an instrument dangerous to public or private liberty. No true mason can be regardless of the laws, nor traitorous to the interests of his country. Nor yet, fifthly, is there any great evil in the secrecy, in certain matters, which we observe, except it be in the painful, prying curiosity indul-

ged by a portion of the community ; and they very easily satisfy themselves, with the conclusion that we *have no secrets worth keeping*. Very well. We will not dispute with them on this point ; and we trust, if they really believe so, they will dismiss from their minds all apprehensions of evil from so impotent a source, and hereafter more wisely decide to let us alone. But there are many other associations that have secrets besides the masonic, from the Government of the nation to the Faculty and Societies of the College; and very wisely, too. Secrecy is the cement of friendship, and the sign of wisdom. The tale-bearer and the fool tell all and more than they know. "A man without secrecy is a letter for every one to read; and the *itch* of knowing secrets is naturally attended with another *itch* for *telling things*. We would whisper in the ears of those thus affected this advice:

Premeditate your speeches, words once flown
Are in the hearer's power—not in your own".

But, what are the real evils to which we are liable, and how may they be best remedied?

1. We are liable, as are the members of all other associations, and even of the Churches, to lose sight of our individual responsibility, and to glide into the "belief, that benevolence consists merely in giving money, and that thus we may be excused from service and self-denial in the cause of charity." The only efficient remedy against this is at hand, and as it is within the reach of every one of us, we need not go in search of others of doubtful expediency. It is the love of God, as well as man, in the heart. This love will constrain us; glowing and circulating in our spiritual system, like the life blood in our hearts, it will impel us to be active for the glory of the supreme Architect. Having communed with the heart of Infinite Love, we may go forth and mingle with our race, filled with a benevolence like that which actuated the good Samaritan—feel that all men are our

neighbors, and that we are the divinely appointed agents of happiness to all within the reach of our means and personal services. This is the principle which harmonizes our jarring natures, and fuses all our hearts and interests into one.

2. Another evil to which we are liable, is, slackness of discipline, and consequent looseness of morals. The immoralities of some of our members, we are compelled, in candor, to confess, have often caused us to blush with shame and sorrow. "Too many forget the sublime principles they have been taught, and the solemn obligations they have incurred." Look, then, more carefully and scrupulously to the pure and rigid rules of moral virtue laid down in your chart. Let the authority of the Lodge be promptly and diligently used to enforce its precepts; let the members be required to live, morally, by the square and compass; let it be henceforth ordained, with the unchangeableness of the laws of the Medes and Persians, that our moral code shall no longer be a dead letter; and it shall come to pass, as it should be, that an intemperate or a profane mason will be as rare and contradictory an object as an intemperate or profane Christian. But here, again, brethren, you must call to your aid the divine remedy already indicated. The high moral standard of your chart is that of the Bible.

3. One more evil to which we are liable, is excessive indulgence and dissipation on public festival occasions. This is avoided by excluding from the festive board the intoxicating bowl. In this, let us be decided, firm and persevering.

4. The last evil to which I shall advert, is our liability to make a misapplication of our funds. But the noble example and resolution of the Grand Lodge, which has with commendable alacrity been followed by this Lodge, and (as far as I have learned) by all others in the State, has almost effectually closed the door to error on this point. It is to exclude all refreshments from the Lodge,

and never to touch for this purpose our sacred charity funds.* Already have we experienced the salutary effects of this wholesome and necessary measure, in the improved tone of moral sentiment, the increased zeal and circumspection, and the handsome augmentation of means and members in all of our Lodges. Under it a new and glorious impulse has been given to Freemasonry in North Carolina; and it is now rapidly advancing, we trust, to a state of perfection and usefulness, worthy of the sublime principles upon which it is founded and eminent ability of the individuals of whom it is composed.

Here I will take occasion to direct your special attention to one object of your charities, which has recently been the subject of the favorable action of the Grand Lodge—it is the establishment of a Charity School under the patronage of Masonry. I had the honor to suggest the expediency of this noble undertaking, in an address before this Lodge, several years ago, on an occasion similar to this; and resolutions, in accordance with that suggestion, have been adopted by the Grand Lodge to raise the means of establishing such an institution. Let us urge forward this noble enterprise. Let us remember that our great object is to meliorate the condition of our fellow-men, and that a general diffusion of knowledge is “the Palladium of a free government, the guarantee of the representative system, and the *Ægis* of our federative existence.” Our brethren in other States are outstripping us in this cause. Let your benevolent bosoms swell with compassion to observe, that no general means of instruction have been afforded to those in our own State, “whom nature has gifted with genius, but to whom fortune has denied the means of knowledge!” O! with what intense anxiety; with what parental so-

*It is just to state, that since the above was delivered, the author has been advised that Hiram Lodge was the *first* to enter into this important and highly commendable resolution.

licitude should we watch the progress of this praiseworthy enterprise! "What greater benefit (we may ask in the impressive language of another) can be conferred upon the destitute portion of the human family, than enlightening their understandings, by extending to them the blessings of education! What is more calculated to meliorate the condition of society, or what can be more acceptable to Deity, than persevering exertions in promoting such extensive plans of benevolence? If there be an object in the whole circle of creation that merits the admiration of mankind, and the approving smiles of Heaven, it must be the man whose life is devoted to the cause of suffering humanity."

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by Rev. J. Ray Shute, Jr.

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